



KING COUNTY 2012 RESIDENT SURVEY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Summary and Purpose

In April 2012, the King County Office of Performance, Strategy and Budget conducted the second ever survey on King County services. The first survey was conducted in spring 2009. Over 1,000 residents were randomly selected to gather statistically valid data regarding:

- satisfaction and perceptions of King County as a community
- satisfaction and priorities of King County's local and regional government services

Survey results and analyses will be used to:

1. Assess progress on the King County Strategic Plan.
2. Inform program and budget priorities.
3. Inform product development and work plan action items.
4. Assess public perceptions of King County and County programs.
5. Compare results to historical and national peer benchmarks in order to understand how we are doing.

Survey Methodology

The survey was conducted during April and May 2012. Residents were first notified of their selection by mail which was followed by a phone call. Residents had the opportunity to complete the survey through mail, internet, or phone – unless they explicitly declined to participate. The survey took approximately 15-20 minutes to complete, and was administered in English, Spanish, and Mandarin Chinese.

Overall, a random sample of 1,025 households participated in the survey. There were at least 250 respondents from Seattle and 125 respondents from each of the following six geographic areas of the County:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| • North/East Urban Unincorporated | • South Urban Unincorporated |
| • North/East Rural Unincorporated | • South Rural Unincorporated |
| • North/East Cities | • South Cities |



Key Findings

Residents generally have a positive perception of King County.

- 83 percent of residents were satisfied with the County as a place to live.
- 78 percent of residents were satisfied with the County as a place to work.
- 74 percent of residents were satisfied with the overall quality of life in King County.

King County is moving in the right direction.

- Overall satisfaction with County services improved two percent from 2009.
- King County's "Overall Resident Satisfaction Index" improved while the "Large Communities National Average" decreased.
- Satisfaction with County services improved or stayed the same in 28 of the 48 areas rated in 2009 and 2012.

Areas of notable significant increase include:

- Flood protection
- Construction and maintenance of roads/bridges
- King County Metro Transit
- Building permits and inspections
- Elections and voter registration

Areas of notable significant decrease include*:

- 911 and Medic One services
- Civil and criminal justice court services
- Veterans' services
- Stormwater management

*See "Expanding on the data" section for more information.

King County is setting the standard among other large U.S. communities for service delivery.

- Satisfaction with the overall quality of County services rated eight percent above the national average for large communities (those with populations above 500,000).
- Satisfaction with the overall value received for County taxes and fees rated eight percent above the national average.

When compared to similar communities with populations greater than 500,000, the County had some relative differences:

King County's Comparative Stronger Satisfaction Ratings:

- The County as a place to live
- The County as a place to raise children
- Overall quality of services provided by the County
- Feeling of safety in neighborhood during the day and at night
- Metro Transit

King County's Comparative Weaker Satisfaction Ratings:

- The County as a place to retire
- How well the County is planning for region's growth
- How easy the County has been to contact
- Solid waste disposal



Expanding on the Data

There are clear indications of the significant impacts of publicly visible events and programs that received large amounts of media attention.

Large, widely communicated projects that have an impact on the community are linked to significant changes of resident satisfaction.

Examples of Increased Satisfaction:

Flood Protection

- Satisfaction increased 18 percent from 2009.
- In 2009 the federally-owned Howard Hanson Dam was damaged in a winter storm. As a result, all people, businesses and infrastructure downstream of the dam in cities and the unincorporated areas, saw an elevated risk of catastrophic flooding.
- King County invested \$31 million to inform and protect residents and business including repairs to shore up levees, relocating critical services, and fortifying buildings in the flood zone.
- King County continued to provide critical communication to communities about the risk and support to residents and businesses with their own preparedness efforts until the dam was successfully repaired in 2011.

Construction and maintenance of Roads and Bridges

- Satisfaction increased eight percent from 2009.
- The South Park Bridge closed in 2010 with high amounts of media coverage coordinated by King County regarding community impact, transit re-routing, and recommend alternative routes.
- King County secured over \$130 million in funding from local, state, and federal resources for rebuilding the South Park Bridge. New construction of the bridge was initiated in 2011, including large amounts of media coverage and community celebration.

Although King County services were not involved in the following instances, it is possible the community's perceptions of services were impacted by the identified media stories, resulting in decreased perceptions of satisfaction.

Examples of Decreased Satisfaction:

911 and Medic One Services

- Satisfaction decreased by 16 percent from 2009. However, these services remain the highest valued King County regional service, with 71 percent overall satisfaction.
- In the month preceding the survey, a high profile case occurred involving a murder/suicide and related questions regarding the response levels of Thurston County 911 dispatch.

Law Enforcement and Court Services

- Decrease in satisfaction with service delivery elements of law enforcement from 2009. Satisfaction with civil and criminal justice court services decreased by 12 percent from 2009.
- An ongoing Department of Justice investigation of Seattle Police regarding equitable and just treatment between racial groups has received ongoing high profile media attention.



Conclusions

When examining the services and products delivered to King County residents, it is extremely important to consider residents' priorities and satisfaction. Moving forward, King County will need to increase its emphasis on the services that have been identified as providing high value to residents and also have high dissatisfaction. Services that are identified as priorities by residents but already have high satisfaction should continue to receive emphasis. Continued or increased emphasis will, in theory, result in increased satisfaction in specific service delivery areas, as well as for the County overall.

Recommended services areas for continued or increased emphasis include:

Regional Services:

- Affordable housing/homeless housing programs
- King County Metro Transit
- 911 and Medic One Services
- Public health clinical services
- Job training/job placement/education
- Mental health/substance abuse
- Disaster preparedness
- Public health protection/disease control
- Human services for at-risk youth victims

Local Services:

- Construction and maintenance of roads/bridges
- Law enforcement
- Land use planning/protection regulations